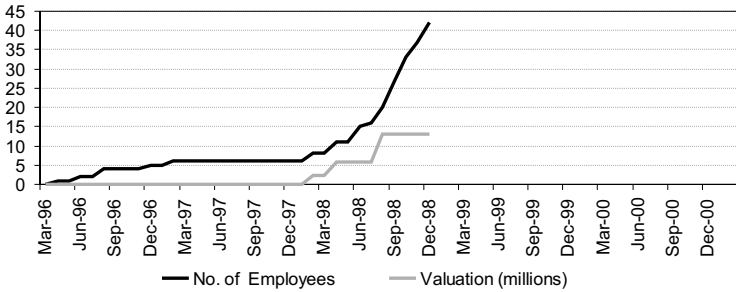


December 1998



Net Sites Take Liaison Role in Biz-to-Biz Transactions

. . . Neoforma Inc., for instance, provides information on hospital supplies . . . Infomediaries are gaining in popularity. Since its founding two years ago, Neoforma, a Santa Clara, Calif.-based company, has brought in more than 15,000 hospital product suppliers on its Web site . . .

Investor's Business Daily
December 14, 1998

Bluescreen



Partitions, earlier erected for protection, now imprisoned the architect.

Since the day that we had enabled our website visitors to communicate with manufacturers of medical equipment, we had been receiving email from people who couldn't find what they were looking for on our site. We displayed a huge directory of products and manufacturers, so I can imagine what visitors might have imagined Neoforma to be. They probably pictured rooms full of dedicated employees, busily chatting on the phone with all sorts of people in the healthcare industry.

Actually, that is pretty much what it was like, only on a much smaller scale than people imagined. There were only a few of us interacting with customers. The rest of the employees were busy keeping the website running and growing. Much of my interaction with customers was with those outside the United States. This was very satisfying because international visitors were effusively grateful for the resources we had made available to them. Due to time zone and language disparities, they had been accustomed to the slow and frustrating process of sending faxes to request information on products. A simple question might take a week of iteration to get an answer. In most cases, we could cut that to a day or less.

As Neoforma grew and we established a department dedicated to assisting customers, I received fewer and fewer new messages. However, to maintain at least some connection with the customers, there were a few visitors I kept in contact with. They'd send me requests for information regarding who made this gadget or that, not knowing that I was the president of the company and usually delegated such inquiries. I'd spend whatever time it took to dig up any tidbits of information I could find in order to service them. This connection to our original purpose was very important to me.